

SID SAYS





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SID SAYS



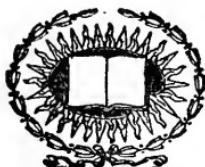


From a photograph by Arnold Genthe

John M. Russell

SID SAYS

BY
ac alpne
JOHN M. SIDDALL
Editor of *The American Magazine*



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TO

J. J. S.

Introducing John M. Siddall

John M. Siddall was born in Oberlin, Ohio. His father and mother, realizing the necessity for supplying the boy with the right kind of ammunition in the campaign of life, loaded him up at Oberlin College and tamped the charge down at Harvard. From that intelligence armory young Siddall stepped into the reporters' room of the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*; from there to the *Chautauquan Magazine*; thence to the editorial staff of *McClure's Magazine*, and finally to *The American Magazine*, of which publication he became editor-in-chief in 1915. A swift journey from

Oberlin to the main battery of opportunity.

Along the road he had been gathering powder and shot with which to fire upon readers. He had passed through every rank in the grand army of experience and knew what he was gunning for.

One perfect day he loaded the old-fashioned pump-gun of ambition which never explodes prematurely or dislocates one's shoulder, took deliberate aim, and let fly his first slug of "Sid Says." A regiment of readers fell under this fire of wisdom, poured into the trenches of doubt. The battle raged fiercely from week to week. The campaign was conducted by a gunner directing his fire from a revolving chair against the central powers of mediocrity, detonating his batteries with the spark of genius.

Conceding the justification for all twelve-inch ordnance fired in the name of democracy, and with the sincere hope that the parliament of man in the federation of the world is not far remote, let us now observe what "Sid Says" in the following pages, confident that they will continue to serve, long after the world is disarmed, the excellent purpose for which they were written.

I now resign to your hands this White Book, from the pen of a white man, guided by the white light of experience.

ROBERT H. DAVIS.

*Written at the seventh hole of the
Dunwoodie Golf Club,
Yonkers, New York,
July 27, 1917.*

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SID SAYS



To Get Thoroughly Married Takes Time and Trouble

SOME people don't understand marriage. They think—before tackling it anyway—that it is a *natural* institution. Their idea is that man by nature first loves and then marries.

Now the love part *is* natural, but the marriage part is an artificial scheme worked out by Society to prevent too frequent changes in the organization. Society finds a couple of youngsters who have a natural attraction for each other and it says to them: "Now, is n't this nice! You two think a lot of each other, don't you? And you don't want

to lose each other, of course! Is n't it a shame you can't see each other except when Ma or Aunt Henrietta is home? I wonder if there is n't something we can do about it. Say, how would this little plan of mine do—marriage? All you have to do is to agree to it and sign a little document. Then you can live together. Yes? You like it? All right —just put your names down here. There now. That's fine! Just the thing!"

Then the young folks learn for themselves the difference between love and marriage. They learn that while love may turn out to be the short haul, marriage is the long haul. Love may get tired and want to quit before the piano needs tuning, but marriage runs right on through the World's Fair, Roosevelt's administration and the opening of the Panama Canal. It becomes the one

permanent job of life—a job hard to resign from and difficult to get fired from. Some people get so disgusted they can't stand it any longer and give up in a huff. But there stands Society, pointing the finger of shame at them and calling them welchers and quitters. Others work at the job indifferently, never win success, never quite fail, and go on from year to year afraid to give up, but dazed and mystified until the end of their days. Some glare at each other like meat axes. Others hate each other in their hearts, but for the sake of children or for other reasons live in a state of armed peace under a flag of truce. In cases of this kind both usually derive enormous self-satisfaction out of the fortitude and self-control which they display. Many work capably, unselfishly and energetically at the job and make a great success of it. To

such as do the job well the rewards are greater than any to be obtained elsewhere in the world.

In business, if you make a great success, there may come a time when people begin to suggest that you ought to get out and give others a chance. Not so with marriage. If you win out in matrimony nobody wants you to quit. You are never superannuated or put on a pension. If you make a success everybody wants you to keep right on, stay in the neighborhood, and come around for the evening.

Marriage furnishes every man a chance to be a great man. In the married relation a young man can be as wise as Washington, as entertaining as Lincoln and as diplomatic as Bismarck. No married man ever has the right to stand up before the world and claim that *he* has n't had opportunities.

Men Can't be Geared Up—Unless They are Cheered Up

I USED to know a man who was a wonder at taking the heart out of those who worked under him. He was the original kill-joy—a paragon of pessimism. He would roll over on any one who showed enthusiasm, and flatten him out until he looked like a punctured toy balloon. I don't think he intended to do all the damage he wrought. He simply did not know any better.

His specialty was criticism. The minute you approached him with a suggestion he got out his instruments and

amputated your new idea. Then he bathed you with an antiseptic wash of gloomy words calculated to render you immune to the development of any fresh outpouring of inspiration. If some one did a good job in the office, this man, who happened to be the boss, would come around and cheer him up by telling him how it could have been done better. He never even admitted that a good job had been done at all, but immediately set about to point out imperfections in the work. In his line, which was criticizing, he held the world's championship. If he had been present at the creation of the earth, which is said to have been put over quite cleverly in record time, he would have hinted that the thing could easily have been done in five days instead of six—and possibly by Friday noon, or in four and a half days, if certain precautions had been

taken and if the work had been more efficiently laid out with a view to speed.

The man about whom I write this heartfelt tribute is dead. While he lived he was about as popular as the hives. Nobody derived any benefit from him. But when he passed away he left behind him (in other minds) a thought. Here it is:

If you have people working for you, one way to encourage them to do more and better work is occasionally to pick out instances where they have shown signs of ability, and commend them. Any worker, particularly a young worker, is likely to be unable to discriminate between his good work and his poor work. If you are his boss it is up to you to help him distinguish between the two. It is also up to you to take the young man in hand and explain to him why the good job is good and

why the poor job is poor. In the first instance he will be hearing something pleasant and inspiring, and in the second instance he will be in a better mood to listen to you. You can also depend upon it that the man who is intelligently praised for a good piece of work will try to duplicate that work so that he may earn more praise.

These gloom boys—like the one I have characterized above—keep an office so dark with their doubts that nobody can see where to go.

*A Great Ancestor
Would be All Right
if so Many Outsiders
Didn't Butt In*

A MAN tackled me for a job the other day. After enumerating his various accomplishments he wound up with a final claim that was intended to impress me with his importance once and for all. He said that he was a direct descendant of Bishop Ump-t-ump—the most learned man of his time in England. I asked what time that was, and he said that it was about four hundred years ago. I told him that—allowing twenty-five years for each generation—

he must be the sixteenth descendant. "No, not the sixteenth," he said, "but the fifteenth." "All right," I said, "call it the fifteenth. Now let's take a sheet of paper and see what your credentials really are. Let's see—you had one father and one mother, two grandfathers and two grandmothers, four great-grandfathers and four great-grandmothers, eight great-great-grandfathers and eight great-great-grandmothers—and so on."

Carrying the multiplication back to the fifteenth preceding generation I showed that at the time the bishop lived, my friend, the applicant, had exactly 32,768 ancestors. In other words, the bishop was only one of the 32,768 human beings who were his forebears at that time.

"You have mentioned the bishop, but what about the other 32,767?" I asked.

“It seems to me that I ought to hear something about them if I am to judge you by the good blood which you say is in you. The bishop was all right. You are lucky to have as much of him in you as you have. But the bishop’s stock has been considerably watered. I don’t believe he would recognize you. What about the rest?”

That is the trouble with this heredity game—if you carry it back very far. Old Mother Nature is a wonderful leveler. Apparently her idea is to carry the race forward together, and not to play favorites. She won’t let geniuses or boneheads breed in a straight line. To the weak she frequently gives a child of incredible talent—to keep the neighbors from getting abusive. To the brilliant and favored of the earth she often presents a choice piece of ivory in the shape of a dull son. If Nature did n’t

protect the rest of us in this manner, it would n't be long until we would all be working for one family, made up entirely of giants.

Another feature of the scheme is that it keeps us all interested. Surprises abound on all sides. There is no telling where the next world-beater and the next dunce are coming from.

Let's Break Away from Granddaddy

I AM for woman suffrage, or almost any kind of suffrage. I would have just as many voters as possible. There are too few, rather than too many.

The whole human race is given over to the granddaddy theory: "Now just you leave everything to me. I know best, and I will decide. You are not smart enough, or you are a woman, or you are a foreigner, or you have n't had the experience. Anyway, I am your grandpa, and I know what is what and I will tell you what to do."

Everybody wants to do that. We all do: we all want to boss. We all want to keep other people from sharing au-

thority with us. We all want fifty-one per cent. of the stock. We want control.

And what is the result? The women and all the rest who do not enjoy the suffrage have an everlasting "alibi." They have an excuse. They would have done things differently if they had had the say. No, sir! I would give them all a chance—if for no other reason, just to find out for once how little the whole crowd, acting together, really knows. It might teach the human race a little humility. Out of the experience there might grow a more enlightened body politic. I would give the suffrage freely just as an educational aid. I would say: "There it is! Take it, if you want it. If you can do anything with it, all right. All the tools for your improvement in the world are at your disposal."

Frankly, I presume that an extended suffrage might mean a worse world for the time being. I have an idea that things might grow worse before they got better. But what of it? It seems to me that unless there is something *inherently wrong* in the ballot it is foolish to keep it away from *this* person and give it to *that* person. Why not give it to all who want it—who express a desire to use it? It seems to me that it comes right down to this point of the *inherent right or wrong of it*. If it is *inherently* right, a good thing in itself, how can you predict who will make the best use of it? If it is aimed to benefit all those who *are* using it, why might it not benefit others?

In conclusion, let us refer to one other granddaddy idea: Granddaddies of all kinds have the notion that the young or the inexperienced or the minority

stockholder or the outsider is going to grab a new instrument for the purpose of killing himself. Ridiculous! The old forget the self-preserving instinct of the young. The young have no idea of destroying themselves. Of course they make mistakes, but on the whole they strive to improve themselves, to save their own skins. If the young were as untrustworthy with their own hides as some of their elders foolishly believe, Broadway would be strewn every morning with the dead bodies of young men and women who have come to the great city from the country.

But it is n't. And such an instrument as the ballot is not going to be used by women or by anybody else for purposes of general, or self, destruction. A greater danger lies in the possibility that the ballot will interest too few.

I should like to see the world really

try sometime to find out what all the people can and will do. Everybody talks about democracy, but nobody wants to try it.

This is a Want Ad for a World-beater

I WONDER when it is going to be easier for people to get through this world without being bored. The capacity of human beings to bore and be bored is enormous.

Think of all the school children who are being bored. There they are—millions of them—bottled up in school-houses patiently learning the art of trying to look interested in something that does n't interest them. When they get out of school they take up post-graduate work along the same line. They go into the law, when they have real love for the dairy business, and into music,

when they are born hardware dealers. Schooled to believe that they *ought* to like this or that, they are ready to try what is “expected” of them—to adopt other people’s ideas of what would be a reputable and proper calling for “one of your position,” and so on through a lot of foolishness. Anyway, they get off on the wrong tack and stay there.

No wonder the world is filled with people who talk and talk about the good time coming when they can retire. To hear them complain about their work you might think they were in jail. They are.

Every employer is familiar with this great Army of Misfits. They are honest. They try. But they have n’t the joy of the game in their eyes. And to save your life you cannot tell how to release their powers and give them wing.

Apparently educational systems are

the crudest of all human institutions. The necessary genius has not yet arrived —the man who can show us how to take a boy, start with his best inclinations, and work out his education, holding his interest, making him proud rather than ashamed of his enthusiasms, turning his enthusiasms to good account, yet cultivating discipline and self-control. A big job! No wonder the man needed is hard to find, and slow in boarding what Herbert Quick calls "this good ship, earth." But he will arrive. There are rumblings.

In the meantime children are listening for the three-o'clock bell, and wondering whether the teacher's cold may not keep her home to-morrow.

Strive as We Will— Our brows slope Gently downward

ONE of the most amusing facts of life is that “Bud” Fisher, maker of newspaper comics, should get for his work fully ten times as much per year as ex-President Eliot of Harvard ever got.

“Bud” makes \$150,000 a year, and, although Dr. Eliot never confided in us about personal matters, we can make a mighty good guess that he never saw more than \$15,000 a year in his life.

Let’s be frank. Ex-President Eliot is a wonderfully smart man. We all respect him and feel that we are way

below him. We know that he thinks deep thoughts and knows how to write them down. We realize that if it were possible to measure a man's brains and ability by dollars he would start in at about \$10,000 a week and get a raise before the end of the month. But Dr. Eliot doesn't get the money. He can't get the money. He can't bring it into the box office.

Now the joke, if there is one, is not on Dr. Eliot: it is on us. You and I are the ones who decide how much Dr. Eliot shall have and how much "Bud" shall have. What is the explanation? The explanation is that we won't pay anything like as much for the dignified impersonal expression of principles and wisdom as we will pay for wisdom served, as "Bud" serves it, with "pep" and personalities.

There is still another way to get at an

understanding of "Bud." Take the cartoonist of the old school, who caricatures public men and public events. Why does that kind of cartoonist have to be satisfied with less than "Bud's" income? The answer runs about this way:

Human beings think first of themselves. They can't help it. They are built that way. In this fact is found the reason why the modern newspaper comic strip is more popular than cartoons of public men or events. The newspaper comic, such as "Bud" and Goldberg draw, is about *you* and *me*. The old-fashioned cartoon is about *somebody else*—Woodrow Wilson or Theodore Roosevelt, for example—and, while you and I regard Wilson and Roosevelt as interesting, we cannot honestly say that we are as much interested in them as we are in ourselves. The

newspaper comic maker, either instinctively or by design, has discovered this truth. So, instead of giving us a picture of Wilson or Roosevelt, he gives us a picture of a comical happening right in our own home or our own office. There in the picture is *you*—and there am *I*—and over there is that bonehead we know, who acts just that way. We have seen him do that a thousand times! Oh, what an idiot he is!

And so, wedged into the New York subway, or on a Euclid Avenue car in Cleveland, we look first at these pictures and chuckle over them. After which, with diminished enthusiasm, we proceed to a solemn consideration of the news of the day and the editor's discussion of liberalism in Russia.

Some Poetry is Made to be Heard—Not Heeded

AFTER a lively day at the office I wedged into the subway the other evening, opened up a New York evening paper, and found on the editorial page the following inspiring and cheerful line:

Ambition has but one reward for all—
A little power, a little transient fame,
A grave to rest in, and a fading name.

I began to wonder why I had gone down-town in the morning if this was all I was going to get out of it. Then I tried to imagine what good it would

have done me to stay at home and sit in a rocking chair all day. If my wife went out and brought me my evening paper, would n't I be just as unhappy when I came upon the poet's words? If poets are going to "kid" me when I work and relatives when I loaf, what can I do? I can't sit off at one side on a star and ruminate on these matters. I have to mix around on earth, where life is real and creditors are earnest. Where shall I go and how shall I manage? What do you recommend, Mr. Poet? I don't enjoy being a poor miserable worm any more than you enjoy seeing me one.

As a matter of fact, the "little power" and the "transient fame" which the poet complains of are first-class things to strive for. They are the best rewards in the market. To refuse to struggle for them is cowardly and unsportsman-

like. The human being who won't play and take his part in the game of life is the most useless of creatures. Here we are on this earth NOW—not 100,000 years ago or 100,000 years hence, but NOW. And here are others like us. Here is work to do and here are pleasures to enjoy. It is up to us to take hold and accept those forms of satisfaction which are available. Perhaps we shall all meet again in another existence where the rewards of ambition are better or, at least, different. If so, go after them when you get there, would be my advice.

The poet who got up this dose of philosophy probably has not the slightest idea of swallowing it himself. He had a fine time writing the lines, and probably he hopes that they will live! No doubt if you stole his poem and tried to palm it off as your own he would

chastise you. You would not find him ready to have *his* name fade yet. He would fight for his rights, and fight to keep his work from being annihilated—which is what we are put in the world for.

Don't order your life on the plans and specifications laid down by a poet. Remember that what a poet writes must rhyme. Often a perfectly well-intentioned and optimistic poet wanders off into the gloom factory looking for odd sizes in metrical feet. A poet would rather scan well than be President.

You Can go Further if You Take Others with You

IT is easy to understand how a man might be three or four or even ten times as successful in business as the general average of men. But when a man is a hundred or a thousand times as successful as his fellows we look on with amazement, and, because we cannot comprehend it, we usually say that he is a howling genius, and let it go at that.

But calling a man a howling genius does not get us anywhere. It does not explain anything. It is an unsatisfactory definition, because it contains no

hint or help. Nobody knows exactly what a genius is.

Now, I am no diagnostician of greatness. I am just as much puzzled as anybody when it comes to defining the qualities that make for superlative achievement. Take, for example, Charles M. Schwab, whose story captivates the imagination of most men. I cannot take Schwab apart and show you why, starting as a day laborer without influence or a dollar to his name, he has turned out to be what he is—a giant in the business world. But I know his story through and through, and as I have considered it this thought has come to me:

There are probably dozens of men in the steel business who know almost as much about that business as Schwab knows. But where other men concentrate on their own personal contribution

to the perfection of some part of the business, perhaps some technical part, Schwab takes an enormous interest in studying and developing men whose talents can be used in broadening and extending the business. You will find that note running all through his story —a curious watchfulness for the new man and almost childlike enthusiasm when he discovers him. Take his delight over Eugene Grace, for example. Grace was a switchman eight years ago, and now Schwab has made him president of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation and his income is a million dollars a year. Schwab is so tickled over Grace that he can hardly hold himself in. He predicts that Grace will someday be the biggest industrial figure in America!

In other words, a man like Schwab, by finding and encouraging men, and by inspiring their loyalty, carries him-

self and all his associates on to a success which none of them could achieve alone. He establishes a long battle line of organization in which there are great numbers of men intelligently used and genuinely appreciated by a commander who realizes that his own success is manifolded by the work of his associates.

In business it is not the individual producer who gets the biggest or the surest rewards: it is the organization builder. And any man, no matter how small his business, ought to recognize that fact. Unless an employer is interested in finding, training, holding and dividing with good men, the business he is engaged in can never grow. It will remain the work of one man; and the work of one man is bound to be limited in size and profits.

You may think that you are in the shoe business or the shirt business or the

furniture business—but you are mistaken. After all is said and done, we are all in the same business—the man business—no matter what we make or sell. Some of the “big fellows” see that point more clearly than the rest of us do—and multiply their power and profits accordingly.

Good Brains Don't all Travel the Same Way

IN their mental operations I see about me all the time two groups of men—the mosquito fleet and the elephant brigade. The mosquito boys think quickly, and dart to conclusions like lightning. You will get an opinion out of them instantly that will be superior to any they will be able to produce after consideration. The elephant boys take more time. They move slowly. They like to think things over. Ask them for an opinion, and they will do better if they meditate.

There is no special choice between these two groups. In each group there are quantities of men of great ability. I can at this moment think of two wonderful Presidents of the United States —one a mosquito and the other an elephant.

As between men and women, it can be said in general that women are of the mosquito type. They pride themselves on their instinct for quick judgment. Men call it intuition. The “bright” boy at school is usually of the mosquito type. His intellectual performances are rapid and showy. He may or may not go on and succeed—but if he does make good he won’t get any particular credit for it from his schoolmates, simply because they “always knew he was smart.” It takes a successful elephant to go back to his class reunion and stir up enthusiasm. Nobody expected much of him,

and consequently everybody is prepared to applaud his achievements.

It is amusing to watch these two kinds of men meet. The mosquitoes bother the elephants, and the elephants bother the mosquitoes. In games, especially, the irritation between the two reaches its height. If it is cards, the mosquito, with his leaping mind, knows in a second what he wants to do, while the elephant has to wait for his inspiration. Some games are better adapted to one of these groups than to the other. Take chess, for example—an admirable game for the elephant type of mind. *There* is a game which two elephants can enjoy for a week at a stretch.

The worst thing that can happen to a man is to think himself an elephant when he is a mosquito, or a mosquito when he is an elephant. Some of the most terrible misfits in the world are

misplaced elephants and misplaced mosquitoes. For example, a mosquito and an elephant can go into law practice together and supplement each other's talents beautifully. But the elephant had better keep out of court, where *nimbleness* of mind is peculiarly required.

Another point is that the mosquitoes ought never to tease the elephants to try to take on mosquito-like speed. Neither should the elephants tease the mosquitoes to try to take on elephantine deliberation. It can't be done. Let every man work according to his own instinct. The minute he begins to impersonate somebody else he loses himself, and his judgments and decisions are of less value.

As a final observation, it may be well to record the fact that both classes of men are entirely satisfied with their equipment. The mosquitoes think

there is nothing so greatly to be desired as agility, and the elephants pride themselves on their deliberation, which is, I suppose, as it should be—for without self-appreciation man would surely perish.

Consider Your Ears— They are not Purely Decorative

HAVE you ever had a good dinner for nothing? I had one the other night. It was absolutely free. I don't refer to the cost of the meal. I refer to the cost of the conversation.

From start to finish I gave nothing and received everything. The man with whom I dined started in with *his* business and *his* ideas and *his* prejudices, and they were the only topics up for discussion throughout the entire evening. When he lagged in his monologue all I had to do was to prompt him with a question, and he was off again.

It was the easiest work I ever did. I got the most with the least effort. I say I got the most—and I did. For he is a wonderfully clever man. If I should name him, most of you would recognize him.

But in spite of all the interesting things he said, I must admit that I don't regard him as really able—at least, I don't think he is as able as he might be if he showed more curiosity about the facts and ideas that are in the possession of others. Putting it differently, I think he is a bad trader. He gives too much and receives too little in return. During this dinner I honestly think I got the best of him—simply because I gained a lot of useful information while he was getting nothing except vocal exercise and the satisfaction that comes from having an attentive listener. Perhaps, indeed, there was nothing of value to

him in *my* point of view. But how did he know? He did not even try to find out.

The fact has frequently been impressed upon me that nearly all really able men are eager devourers of other people's information and ideas. They are too good traders to be always giving and never receiving. They know better than to tap continually their reservoir of wisdom without setting a catch-basin for a new supply. Not long ago a journalist of my acquaintance went out to Chicago and had several extended talks with J. Ogden Armour in preparation for some articles. When he returned to New York one of the first things he had to say was that Armour had asked him more questions than he was possibly able to ask Armour. Theodore Roosevelt is a human question mark. Peter Dunne (creator of "Mr.

Dooley," and one of the wisest men on this planet) never lets any grass grow under his feet if he suspects that you have a new fact or a fresh point of view concealed on your person.

Ordinarily, the man who ceases to ask questions has ceased to learn. And when a man ceases to learn he grows complacent. Smugness sets in and he begins to deteriorate. The lack of curiosity in a man is a sign of age. You can be sure that you are getting old if you have lost curiosity. But old age—intellectually—comes on very early with some people, and with others it never seems to come. Many old people have younger and more eager minds than their children.

In New York recently, Willie Collier put on a show that has one extraordinary line in it. It is a line that might suggest a good New Year's reso-

lution for many people. One of the characters says to another: "Say, don't you know that you were given *one* mouth and *two* ears for a purpose?"

Don't Get Anxious About New York: Let New York Get Anxious About You

A N old friend called to ask my advice the other day. He came to New York from a little Indiana town. He has a wife and four children—and a poor job. As I talked with him I kept picturing him where he belongs—back in the old home town. If he had stayed there he might have worked into a \$1,000 or \$1,200 job, which would have been sufficient to satisfy all his needs and most of his wants. He could have had a garden, a yard, a savings bank account

and a membership in the local lodge. Evenings he could have sat on his porch and held converse with his neighbors. On the Fourth of July he could have been "some punkins" at the neighborhood picnic. He might have become a village councilman; and when the fall campaign arrived, he could have been on the committee to welcome the congressman when that great personage came to town in search of votes. In other words, he might have had a real place in the community.

Now what does he get in exchange for the \$1,000 or \$1,200 that he earns in New York? Well, I suppose he gets a measly little flat with dark bedrooms, a fine assortment of cheap lunches, two chances daily to hang by his eyelids in the subway, a great fund of loneliness and a woe-begone feeling of uselessness.

That is the trouble with these whaling

big cities like New York and Chicago. They are all right for men of known ability—men of force and ambition who have learned how to direct their talents. But they are hard on untried men—men who have not yet found themselves. This is not said for the purpose of scaring venturesome and unattached young fellows of ability who want to try their muscles on the big town. There is no danger of scaring them. They cannot be scared. The morning trains are bringing them in by the hundreds—this very day—and all the printing presses in the world could not drive them back. But it *is* said for the purpose of causing every small-town man, with responsibilities, to consider carefully before coming whether he has a definite aim in coming, and whether he has faith and conviction that he really has something to give to the big town.

Don't come just for the ride. Don't come except from positive choice. Don't come just because others are coming. The best rule of all is this—if you have no definite, compelling reason within yourself to come, don't come until you are invited. Do your job well at home. If the big town wants you she will call for you. A hundred telegrams went out from New York to-day to various and remote parts of the United States carrying offers of good jobs to smart chaps who have done so well that New York has heard of them. Only last week I met a young man from Massachusetts who had just been offered an \$8,000-a-year place in New York. He said he had n't the least idea how the thing started—except that he had done work that had been brought to the attention of several New York bankers, one of whom had looked him

up and then flashed him the offer of a job.

So leave your name and address with the local operator and go back to your knitting. New York is not tongue-tied. If she needs you she 'll wire. Of course, if you think you are a record-breaking genius you will probably take the first train for Broadway—and maybe it will be just as well for you to do so. A genius is just as unhappy one place as another. But, genius or no genius, there won't be any brass band to meet you when you arrive at the Grand Central Station.

It is Sometimes Better to Remain a Bore than to Make Yourself too Interesting

WHEN you are talking to a man, and when his interest in what you are saying begins to lag, a good way to resuscitate him is to lean forward and say: “What I am now going to tell you is in the *strictest confidence*. You must not breathe a word of it.” Ordinarily one who has that said to him will wake up and pay better attention to your conversation—at least for a while. What you have really done when you say that to a man is this: You have prevented him from going to

sleep on your hands, you have stirred his curiosity, you have advertised!

As a scheme for stimulating interest in your line of talk it is all right. But if what you then proceed to tell is something that you really want to have kept secret, the plan is a poor one. If you have information that you don't want people to spread around—keep it to yourself.

The trouble with a human being who hears a thing in confidence is often this—he can't remember that he heard it in confidence. He remembers the item of news, providing it is juicy enough, but the fact that he heard it in confidence drops out of mind, and then he begins to tell it around. Telling a thing in confidence is a little like handing a man a jewel in an envelope, and at the same time warning him to take as good care of the envelope as he takes of the jewel.

Everything goes all right for a while. But by and by the envelope wears out. It is a flimsy sort of thing anyway. And so there comes a time when the envelope, having grown thin and weak and frayed at the edges, slips off or is cast off and nothing remains but the jewel.

How did I acquire all this wisdom on the subject of confidential communications? I will tell you. I acquired it recently in the School of Experience. About three months ago I told something in strict confidence to a friend—a man of the highest character—one who would not injure me intentionally for the world. But (and this is what gave me a jar) he went and lost the green envelope, for yesterday he called at my office, carefully closed the door, drew his chair near to mine, and in a low voice told ME in “strictest confidence” exactly the same thing that I had told him!

Some Mighty Good Salaries go to Men Who would Almost as soon Work for Nothing

A FRIEND of mine who is as good a man in his line as anybody in the United States stood in my office a few days ago and said a surprising thing. I had been complimenting him on one of his latest achievements. His face lighted up as he remarked: "Of course I got a lot of money for that job, but between you and me I'd do these things for nothing if I could n't get anybody to pay me for them. I'd rather do them than eat. It's a shame to take the money. Don't give me

away, or they 'll be asking me to cut down my price and I 'll be doing it."

That sounds like bunk. But wait a minute. Think clear through the proposition. This man will never be cutting down his price at all. It is exactly the other way around with him—and he knows it. The truth is that his income goes on rising—because those he works for keep bidding up for his services. What he meant was that he has found the secret of progress and enjoyment—namely, a field of activity to which he is suited and in which he is so interested and happy that he works as if he were playing. No wonder he performs miracles! Naturally he is glad to have the large sums of money he earns. They are a sort of crude measurement of his efficiency. They show in a rough way how other people estimate his value. But the main point is that he has found

his niche and that he concentrates on his job for days and weeks at a stretch. All his thought is concerned with what he can put *into* his work—not what he can get *out* of it. Lucky man!

Evidently the same thing is true of James A. Farrell, whose story I was reading the other day. Farrell is President of the United States Steel Corporation, and is noted for his wonderful memory. He says that the secret of a good memory is interest, and that anybody can remember things he is genuinely interested in. Anyway, Farrell devours facts about the steel business—and remembers them. Now the chances are that Farrell has got into the one place on earth which he can fill the best—the presidency of the Steel Corporation. It is a safe bet that he would rather do that job for nothing than be without work of a similar kind. And,

of course, it follows that he is worth more to the Steel Corporation than he would be if he were less absorbed in what he is doing.

I wish I had the prescription to hand out that would turn every man into some kind and degree of a Farrell. But I have n't. There is only one thought I can suggest. The idea is simply this: don't fake for years and years an interest in something that bores you. Don't pretend all your life, for the sake of fancied appearances, to enjoy some form of work that you really dislike. Of course you should give yourself a fair trial at a job before throwing it up, because often a man learns to like something that he did n't like when he set out. But you know what I mean—don't keep at it indefinitely. Quit and try something else. Cut and run before it is too late.

The acid test to apply to your job is this: If you had money enough to live on, would you stay at it without pay? If you don't love it that much, hunt for another—that is, if you are young and free from the responsibilities and obligations which govern older men. The greatest successes of the world are "crazy" about their work. Look at Edison. Look at Paderewski. How those men enjoy their jobs! Can anybody imagine that they love money more than work! And yet each—because of his jealous devotion to his work—has been richly paid in money. Both men are great artists. They have found what they wanted to do and stuck to it. Treat yourself as if you were an artist. To a certain extent you probably are—in some line—if you will avoid shams and give yourself fully to your job.

Don't Believe Everything Your Ego Tells You

TWENTY-THREE years ago Coxey's Army marched to Washington. All the papers were full of it. Mention Coxey to anybody over thirty-five years old and see the understanding in his face. Know Coxey and his blooming army? Well, I should say so! Now try Coxey on men and women in the twenties. Just try it. It will open your eyes. Coxey? Who the blazes is Coxey? Looks of confusion and ignorance.

Coxey, you see, quit advertising. That is, the Coxey publicity ceased.

And the world has filled up with people who never heard of him. Millions and millions of them.

That is the way with some advertisers. They speak up a few times and then go back to their factories. There, by George, we've told 'em! And then old Father Time begins to work. And the undertaker. And the parson armed with a marriage license. And the baby carriage. And rheumatism. And, first you know, the world is peopled with new bosses, new buyers and new housekeepers who never heard of you. Incredible! What!—never heard of *me*? No, never heard of *you*! Sorry to disappoint you.

Man is provided with a large sized ego. If he didn't have it he couldn't stand it to live. Without an ego he would probably take one look at the moon and go jump in the lake. Now

the best thing that an ego does is to give you a fine feeling of permanence. Of course you are n't permanent, and your better sense tells you so. But Mr. Ego keeps trying to make you *think* you are. What he aims to do is to make you feel comfortable. Nice thing to have around—an ego. You need him in your business. But don't believe everything he tells you. He is the most agreeable and ever-present liar on your premises.

Now that We Have Bought Them—Let's Bury Them!

WELL, you and I have got our Liberty Bonds. In buying them I suppose we think we have conferred a great favor on Uncle Sam. And in a way we have. But looking at it another way we are just plain lucky —lucky that a situation arose which compelled us, for at least once in our lives, to put something aside for a rainy day, and to put it aside in the most conservative and solid form. The rate of interest may not look very big to us—but the *principal is safe*. That is the main thing. John Rockefeller may

lose his wits and his coin and have to go to an old men's home, but those government bonds will still be good. They are backed by Uncle Sam's power to tax the combined assets of the nation. Therein lies the peculiar beauty of a government bond. The Government can do what no private corporation can do—it can go out and compel people to pour in taxes enough to enable the Government to meet its obligations. North America would just about slide off into the sea before anything could happen to destroy the value of those bonds.

The reason I am so emphatic about the importance of a sound investment like this is that I have been thinking about the ordinary man's incapacity in normal times to lay by and hang on to money. A big life insurance company gathered some facts about this not long ago. Here they are:

Take 100 healthy men at the age of 25 and follow them. At 65 here is where you will find them:

36 will be dead.

1 will be very rich.

4 will be wealthy.

5 will be supporting themselves by work.

54 will be dependent upon friends, relatives or charity.

Or, to sum up, only 5 out of the 64 living will be "well fixed." The rest will either not have saved anything because of their extravagance, or they will have lost their capital through trying to make it yield an absurd return.

In other words, this Liberty Loan is one of the few direct benefits to be derived from the Great War—but a real benefit nevertheless. For it encourages all of us to be thrifty, and to put at least a part of our money into an absolutely

safe place—where its protection does not depend upon any individual but is guaranteed by the combined assets and earning abilities of a whole nation.

Thank God, therefore, for the Liberty Loan. Hide those bonds and try to forget them. They will be pretty little things to dig up and show to the meat man when you are 65.

A Mail Carrier is Not the Only One Who Has to Keep on Delivering

WE were talking about a young man here in New York. Said one: "I'll tell you why that chap is such a wonder. The minute he winds up one big job he goes after another. He wastes no time patting himself on the back for past achievements. When he finishes putting something over he turns around and says to himself in regard to his own performance—'Oh, that wasn't much. I have got to beat that. Now I must get to work and really do something.' Then he pitches into a

fresh job as if he had never accomplished a thing in his life."

In other words, you have not only got to do good work, but you have got to repeat and keep on repeating if you want the world to continue to respect you.

The other day a famous author was telling me how he felt when his first story was accepted. He said that within a few minutes the thought flashed across his mind that he could not stop—but *must* go on. One good story must be followed by another and another and another—else his reputation would die and he would be humiliated. He said that the feeling was not exactly comfortable—that the prospect was in a way terrible. "Being successful," he said, "is not easy. The successful man advertises to the world that he can do certain things well—and he must go on

making good or back off the map. It's a great sensation, a great experience—worth almost anything—but it is n't a snap."

It is the same way in business. The salesman who sets a high mark has to go right out and beat that mark or suffer by comparison with his own record. He can't sit down in a rocking chair and devote the rest of his life to receiving congratulations.

Have you ever sat in a restaurant and compared your job with that of a waiter? Try it sometime. No matter what your work is I am sure you will see the point if you watch the waiter and think how exactly his job typifies yours. Take, for example, my job—that of an editor. An editor's job is exactly like that of a waiter. He has to go and get something good and bring it in. And after he has brought it in he has to go

right out and get something more and bring that in. The minute he sits down or stops to talk unnecessarily with the guests, he ceases to give as good service as before. Then the guests who praised him a moment ago begin to growl. And so, almost immediately, he has turned from a good servant into a poor one.

This fits any line of human activity. A continuous performance is what is wanted. Nothing else counts.

Here is a New Suit of Clothes for Some Old Ideas

TWO interesting expressions have appeared in the vernacular of business within a few years—"selling yourself" and "selling the other fellow." To "sell yourself" is to convince yourself of the soundness of your own ideas; to "sell the other fellow" is to convince another that your position is right. "He is absolutely sold on himself" and "He has sold me completely" are frequently heard among salesmen.

Whoever you are, wherever you are, keep on "selling the other fellow." Never let up. When younger men, or

other men, come into your office, do not depend on them to dig up the story of your greatness. In many cases they won't even know that such a story exists. They will really be impressed only by fresh exhibits of your ability. You must begin with them almost as if you had never achieved anything, and convince them day by day that you can do great things. One new example of what you can do is more convincing to your associates than a whole storeroom full of traditions of past performances. Many a young man is not "sold" on his boss, either because the boss is played out and has nothing to "sell," or because he has grown indifferent to the work of "selling." "Stuffed clubs" and "old crabs" are among the expressions used by the young to describe those who have hardened to the point where they think it unnecessary ever again to win

anybody or explain anything. They become lawgivers—a high position especially reserved for persons of great solemnity who, when they fall, fall far enough to make the sight worth seeing.

Keep on "selling yourself." Keep your mind active and keep up faith in what your mind produces. Have enthusiasm and self-confidence. Have illusions. Death comes when illusions pass. There is n't necessarily a funeral, but death has come just the same. Without illusions you prowl around and bore people. Nothing remains to interest you. No way remains by which you can interest others. Did you ever stop to consider that people are far more interested in your illusions than in anything else about you?

Wives must keep on "selling" their husbands, and husbands should never stop "selling" their wives. Children

must "sell" their parents, and parents must "sell" their children. In no other way is confidence between human beings maintained. When the effort to "sell" stops, the tie that binds is broken.

If This be Contempt of Court—Send Me the Bill

HUNDREDS of thousands of men in this country have an idea that the Government (city, county, state or national) is wasteful and inefficient. Pin a lot of these men down, and you will find that they got that idea from personal observations made when called to do jury duty. That is about all they know about the Government—but that is enough to disgust them.

I was recently called as a special juror on a case here in New York. About seventy-five men were called on the case.

Out of the seventy-five, twelve were to be selected. That is all right and necessary. But when we seventy-five men gathered—coming distances ranging from a block to ten or fifteen miles in the midst of a busy Monday morning—it was discovered that the attorney for the defense was not in court. He was sent for and when he appeared it developed that he had not been notified that the case was to be called. He and the Judge and the District Attorney agreed to an adjournment for a few days—and back we all went to our offices, having wasted from two to three hours apiece. Remember this, however: Each of us will get *two dollars* for that day's jury duty—although we did nothing. That makes one hundred and fifty dollars, to say nothing of the time of the court and the officers and the rest.

A few days later we gathered again

—seventy-five men from all over New York City. Another adjournment. More time wasted. One hundred and fifty dollars more to be given us—for no service—to say nothing of the money value of the time wasted by all concerned.

There was another beautiful little irritation: The clerk who called the roll sat at a desk fully thirty feet from the first row of jurors. He growled because he could not hear us answer our names. Did it occur to him that he might move forward to a position where he could hear better? Of course not. He has the habit of doing things thus and so, and probably nothing could induce him to change. He prefers to sit where he is, shout his own lungs out, and strain his ears.

The whole performance was so silly that it was mildly enjoyable. I think

every man in the room was guilty of inward contempt of court.

Consider this additional fact: When we in the jury panel come finally face to face with the defendant, we shall very likely see a poor, flat-headed, mentally sick person, more in need of a doctor than he is of Sing Sing. Personally I hope he will turn out to be a good, healthy, first-class, upstanding crook. Then there may be some satisfaction in taking him in hand. Punishing sick folks is n't much fun.

It's the Encores People Call for that Make Lying Difficult

IHAVE long considered issuing a warning to liars—so here goes.

We are all tempted to decorate the truth. Frequently the truth is no lily—so we like to paint it.

But we have another human frailty which, particularly when it comes to our wanting to tell a lie, is exceedingly bothersome, and that is our poor memories. We don't realize how often we tell the same story twice—and we don't realize how hard it is to tell the same story twice alike, especially if it isn't true. You recall the old Hoosier saying, "I reckon that a man in order to be

a good liar must have a wonderful memory."

There is no doubt that it is easier to tell the truth than it is to tell a lie and then try to repeat it. Test yourself on this. Suppose somebody asks you what size hat you wear. If you tell the truth about it you won't have any trouble answering the same question a month from now. But if you lie about it you may not recall the lie you told and so find yourself puzzled.

That is how this editorial happened to be written—only it was n't the size of a man's hat that got him into trouble—but the size of his salary. A friend of mine had two interviews with a man whom he was considering for an important job. The interviews were three months apart. At the first interview the man was asked what salary he got. He mentioned a certain figure. At the second interview

the same question was asked and a different figure was mentioned. It so happened that my friend's connections were such that he could get at the truth. He did get at it—and found that both figures were lies. That ended the negotiations for the new job.

As a race we human beings are pretty clever. We can move about the monkey cage (called the world) with considerable agility. But the liars' trapeze is beyond the reach of most of us. We can't swing up to it without great danger of falling and getting hurt.

If Your Ego Bothers You—Go Look at the Stars

A CUBE one seven-thousandth of an inch in diameter is a pretty small object. It would not choke a mosquito. You could not see it unless you used a microscope. Possibly, if it were made of the right kind of stuff, and if it flew into your eye, you might feel it. But even that is doubtful.

Yet John A. Brashear, the great yet modest Pittsburgh scientist, shows that a little cube just that big floating around in Lake Erie takes up exactly as much room in the lake, by comparison, as our earth fills in the space around us, known and measured by astronomers, the boundaries of

which are only as far away as the nearest star.

This recalls Mark Twain's great story, "Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven," wherein are recorded the difficulties which the captain confronted in the next world when he tried to explain where he came from. He said that San Francisco was his native place. Nobody in heaven had heard of San Francisco. Then he named California, and, meeting with no response, he went on with considerable irritation to mention the United States and America. Nobody had heard of them. Finally he claimed the earth as his former home, and at last, after a long search through the records of heaven, it was discovered that among the billions upon billions of stars, worlds, constellations and planets there was, in the dusty tomes, a slight reference to an insignificant speck

known in heaven as The Wart, and recognized by Stormfield as our good old Mother Earth.

In this connection it is also well to remember that the wonders of time are as great as the wonders of space. Nobody knows or can even guess how long this Big Show has been running. Anyway, it is a very old show as well as a very large one.

I am glad that Mr. Brashear has brought this matter to our attention again. It is a good thing once in a while to be set right on our comparative importance in the scheme of things. At this time it is an especially welcome and refreshing bit of comment. For one thing, it makes the Emperor of Germany seem less important. Also, it will help us to pass through the egotism and dogmatism of political campaigns with better perspective and more

humor. Furthermore, the hardships we have to endure may be nothing compared with those which are pestering the inhabitants of other worlds, who, for all we know, may be even more self-centered and sensitive than we—though this seems hardly possible.

That a knowledge of the stars helps to keep one's ego in proper restraint is demonstrated in the case of Mr. Brashear himself, for in all Pittsburgh there is n't a man with less ego than he. They all call him "Uncle John." Anybody, from the mayor down to the tiniest newsboy on Smithfield Street, will swear to you that he is the biggest man in the city—and the simplest and most attractive. Street-car motormen and conductors spy the old gentleman a block away and hold up traffic for the privilege of getting him as a passenger. They love him because he loves them—

and because arrogance and superiority are totally absent from his make-up. From studying the stars "Uncle John" has learned humility.

Money Talks—But There are Other Speakers

HOW would you like a \$25,000 a year job? I suppose you think you would like it a lot. But *would* you like it? Would you enjoy the work you would have to do in order to earn that much salary? Would you be willing to pay what it costs to become a \$25,000 a year man?

This brings us to an interesting fact about the human animal—namely, his way of pretending sometimes to ambitions which he does not possess. Ask almost any man in the United States to-day whether he would like a job pay-

ing \$25,000 a year, and he will tell you yes—vehemently and with evident sincerity. But in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred he would not really mean it. He would like the money—yes—but to earn it by giving a corporation the price which it asks in return for that much money would not suit him at all.

In spite of the apparent lure of money, the great mass of human beings are not lured by it so much as they are lured by other things. They think they are, but they are n't. Men get their orders from within themselves, not from without. And often the inward desires which control men are so powerful that they make the "almighty dollar" look mighty weak. Frequently laziness is in command, in which case a rocking chair seems more valuable than the presidency of a railroad. Some-

times whisky is the boss. We all know men who sacrifice good incomes in order to have lots of time for drink. In millions of other cases men deliberately choose jobs which do not pay well in money, although they pay enormously in other forms of satisfaction. Men are constantly deciding against the scramble for money and in favor of a quiet life, or a life devoted to teaching or science or public service, or a life devoted to some other useful enthusiasm which has no special cash value.

The truth is that most men have no taste for the duties that go with the biggest salaries. The man who is worth \$25,000 a year to a corporation must be willing to work evenings and holidays. He must be ready to upset all personal plans if business calls him. He must be ready at a moment's notice to give up Sunday with his family and spend it in

a railway trip to another city for a Monday morning conference. In his office he must also bear the brunt. He must be eager to take responsibility and be ready to make hard and unpleasant decisions. He must have real zest for tough, irritating problems. And he cannot hide behind others. Big pay envelopes go only to those down in front where the eggs are thrown.

Considering Who Grandpa was—We're Not So Bad

WHEN I was about ten years old I went to an animal show where there were fifteen or twenty monkeys, mostly small, in one cage. But among them there was one very large monkey, four or five times as big as any of the others. I don't know who invited him, or how he came to be there, but he made his presence felt, as we shall see.

When feeding time came, the keeper appeared with a large bundle of cabbage leaves which he threw into the cage, a few at a time. I then saw the advan-

tage of being a large monkey in a cage filled with small monkeys, for as fast as the keeper threw the leaves into the cage the big monkey grabbed them and held onto them. When some of the little monkeys criticized him, he merely showed his teeth and went on with his work.

After he had acquired all the leaves that had been thrown into the cage he gathered the whole supply together into a pile and sat on top of the pile. Then he ate all that he wanted—and perhaps more than he wanted. He did not eat *all* the leaves that had been passed into the cage because his stomach would not hold so many, but he did his best. After he had swallowed what he could, he lost interest, yawned and walked away. Then the little monkeys scampered to the remaining pile of leaves and got what was left—but not without all sorts

of bickerings and inequalities among themselves.

Although the big monkey made himself unpopular, both inside and outside the cage, he was not sensitive about it. Indeed, why should he be? Inside the cage, where he understood the language, size and strength were the only things worth having. There was n't a monkey on the premises that did not really envy him—not a monkey that did not wish to be like him. Outside the cage were a lot of two-legged grumblers resembling monkeys—but why worry about their unintelligible mutterings, especially since they were safely shut off from the cabbage leaves by good substantial bars!

Perhaps this little story of brute force and brazen selfishness will remind you of some human being who makes an occasional bad showing. Don't be too

hard in your judgments, however. Be patient. You must not blame men if they show monkey characteristics once in a while. You know what that famous high-brow Darwin and his successors have taught us—that men and monkeys descended from the same ancestor, namely, a certain brand of ape. The work of transforming us from apes began four or five million years ago, but I would not go so far as to say that the job has been entirely finished. Lots of time will be required. It takes more than a jiffy to get off one's all fours. This word "human," you know, is a comparatively recent degree that has been conferred upon us.

It is Hard to Tell How Numb a Young Skull is

WHAT has become of Blanchard Ripley James? Long ago he was a high-school classmate of mine out in Ohio, and now he is lost. The other day I found that they were advertising for his post-office address in the village paper back home. It seems that for years and years he clerked in a store in Grand Rapids, after which he tightened up his belt strap and made a dive into the Great West—with what success nobody knows.

Well, sir, I could not believe it. Blanchard Ripley James lost? Never!

Why, he was the boy we voted as the one among us with the brightest future. The greatest things were predicted for him. He looked like Daniel Webster, kept his hair brushed, beat us all at our studies, took more interest in school than anybody—and, above all, how he could wag his jaw! He was the best speaker of pieces that ever walked up the steps to the rostrum of the Second Congregational Church. On graduation night he was our prize exhibit. The rest of us looked foolish beside him, and felt foolish. Our only pride lay in the fact that for the moment our names were printed on the program with his and we were going to receive just as good an imitation sheepskin diploma as he. But of course we expected that on the morning after graduation the gulf between him and us would begin to widen, and would increase until he

would be talking on the floor of the United States Senate, and we, with our wives and children, would be sitting in the visitors' gallery happy in our membership in the "I-knew-him-when Club."

But the whole thing has shifted. You can page the United States Senate, and even the House of Representatives, and you won't find him. He is not there. Blanchard simply did not come through with the wallop.

What is the answer? The answer is that youth is always a mystery. You simply cannot pick winners that early. You cannot distinguish between the able and the stupid, the slippery and the honest, the playful and the vicious, the imitative and the original, the weak and the strong, the aggressive and the servile, the ambitious and the complacent. Youth is a period of uncertainty and

hope. This is one reason why fathers and mothers are so happy over their children. Nobody knows what great surprise is in store. The slowest-appearing child in the family *may* (*may*, mind you) turn out to be the wonder of the world. At any rate, the neighbors had best not point the finger of scorn—not yet, not yet! For if they do they may have to take it back.

And so, clear up to commencement night, and for some time after, fathers and mothers can claim great things for every child in the family—and nobody will dare dispute them. Of course, the world will finally call for a show-down, but when it does those who might be interested in the results are themselves lost, or scattered so far that it would take an explorer to find them and carry them the news.

Some boys die in youth—thus pre-

serving forever the mystery as to their hidden talents. Usually it is said of such that they were bright and remarkable, with a great future before them. We all worship success—even going so far as to worship it where it does not yet exist.

So get your white vest ironed and be ready for the graduating exercises when they come. You cannot tell who will be there. It may be the coming Thomas A. Edison, or it may be the coming conductor on the East College Street car line.

I Will Hang This on Balboa—Because He Has Had His Fun and is Dead

THE other night I read in my evening paper that Balboa had discovered the Pacific Ocean four hundred and three years ago that day. At first I swallowed the statement—as any human being in good and regular standing would be likely to do. But the moment I began to think it over I experienced an inward chuckle. Who gave Balboa the idea that he was the first to find the Pacific? And what made the rest of us pin a medal on him for an honor he never deserved? Don't we

know—if we stop to consider—that the Pacific Ocean was discovered and forgotten by countless generations before Balboa was born? The truth is that Balboa, instead of being the first to discover the Pacific, was one of the last.

We are wonderful creatures—we human beings—when we give way fully to the ego that is in us. We imagine that the whole earthly show began with us, and that it is going to end with us. We think *our* experiences are new, peculiar and exclusive. If our teeth ache we say that *our* teeth are especially sensitive. When we compare notes on the advantages of various shaving utensils we say we can't use this or that because *our* beards are particularly stiff. If we shiver on a raw day we say that *we* are peculiarly susceptible to cold—that nobody ever suffers with the cold as *we* do. I know a man who saw Joe Jefferson

play Rip Van Winkle. I saw him play it, and so did millions of others. Jefferson played the part 6,000 times. But to hear my friend talk you would think that Joe never really rose up and became equal to the rôle except once—and that was the night *he* saw it.

Yes, we like the feeling that we are the first—the only onlys—the favored few. We never get it into our heads that the earth is a very old apartment—inhabited by untold generations of tenants, each of which repapers and repaints the place in an effort to prove that it owns the premises. Of course we admit academically that there were others before us, but we don't honestly believe it. Take, for example, Hammurabi, Rameses, Ptolemy and Plutarch. Those were men of our own comparative generation, yet they are not real to us. Down in our hearts we

would never credit them with having as sensitive teeth as we have. And it is a certainty that they never enjoyed anything as much as we. Nor did they suffer with the cold.

And yet this wonderful little ego is the only thing we have worth possessing. If, dear reader, your name be Henry Smith, the fates when they set you down in our midst might well have instructed you as follows:

“Now, Henry, remember that there is nothing new in the world but you. All the rest is old. Here are the old grease-stained blocks for you to play with—the old ideas and the old facts—which billions of men have played with before you, and built into structures which bore the stamp of their own individuality. Build, Henry, build. Make the best out of the materials that you can. But, above all, put *yourself*

into the work. Don't imitate, don't copy. Your only chance is to be yourself. What *you* do is the best that you can contribute. You can't add anything to the show but Henry Smith. Make sure that you really add him."

And there you are.

Egos are all right. They are the best thing we have—our most valuable asset. And yet they furnish the biggest laugh.

